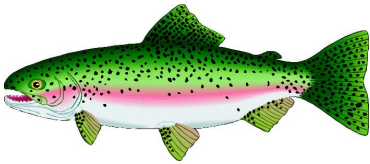


Fishing

The fishery of the Gunnison area has been changed by the three dams of the Wayne N. Aspinall Unit which form the lakes of Curecanti. Where once the fish of the Gunnison River fed upon the aquatic insects of the area, new fish species which make their home in the reservoirs feed upon plankton, small microscopic plants and animals. Federal and state fish hatcheries stock nearly three millions fish in the lakes each year. Their efforts help to keep the fishing exciting at Curecanti.

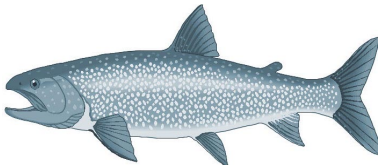
Five Species Of Fish

Rainbow Trout



Rainbow Trout - Identifying marks are black spots on a light body and a red stripe along the sides of the fish.

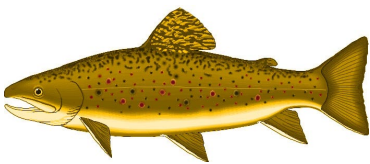
The colorful rainbow trout is named for the pink stripe along its side. Rainbow trout, introduced into the Gunnison River in the 1880's, are stocked quite heavily and can be caught in the river areas or in the lakes. River and shore fishing can be very productive, but in the late summer when waters are warm, the fish seek cooler areas in the middle of the lake. Then trolling at slow speeds works best.



Lake Trout - This fish has a white, irregular spotting pattern on a dark background. Veriform markings over the back and head. Unlike other trout, they have a deeply indented tail fin.

Lake Trout (Mackinaw)

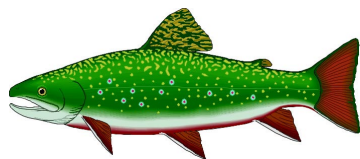
The deep subsurface canyons of Blue Mesa Lake provide excellent habitat for the big lake trout or mackinaw. The "mac" can reach tremendous sizes - one monster weighed over thirty pounds! To catch one of these "big ones", you must fish deep and in cold water (45-50°F).



Brown Trout - The spotting pattern is composed of black spots and also red-orange spots surrounded by light blue.

Brown Trout (German)

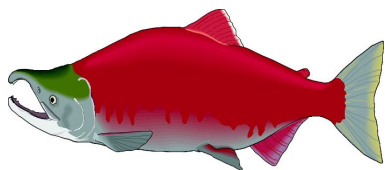
Recognized by its dark brown color and red spots, the brown is another large fish species which can be found in all three of the lakes. Some of the largest fish taken from Morrow Point and Crystal Lakes are brown trout.



Brook Trout - The pectoral, pelvic and anal fins are often orange, edged with black and white. The body is dark with red spots surrounded by blue and white spots.

Brook Trout

The brook trout, the smallest of the trout, live in the streams which feed the lakes of the recreation area. Curecanti Creek, which feeds into Morrow Point Lake, can be one of the best spots for catching the “brookies”.



Kokanee Salmon - At the end of their third summer, females develop a red-gray-white pattern while males develop a hook jaw and turn brick red.

Kokanee Salmon

Three reservoirs have provided a home for a new species of fish in the Gunnison country- the Kokanee salmon. The Kokanee travel in schools, feeding on the animal plankton of the lake. So if you get a strike while trolling but are unable to bring the fish in, make another slower pass through the same area and you should be able to land the silver colored fish. The salmon are stocked from the Roaring Judy Fish Hatchery north of Gunnison. When they are ready to spawn at the end of their third summer, they travel upriver to return to the hatchery. At this time, they no longer feed, and after they spawn, they die. In order to insure that a sufficient number of eggs are collected and fertilized, the snagging of Kokanee salmon is prohibited during September and October from the Lake City bridge upstream to the East River. Refer to the Colorado State fishing regulations for information on snagging seasons.

Limits

<i>Species</i>	<i>Daily Bag Limit</i>	<i>Possession Limit</i>
Trout of any species including: 8	8	8
Rainbow Trout		
Brown Trout		
Brook Trout		
Lake Trout (Mackinaw)		
Brook Trout 8” or less 10	10	10
Kokanee Salmon (angling) 10	10	10
February 1 to August 31		
Kokanee Salmon (snagging) 40	40	40
September 1 to January 31		
Crayfish no limit	no limit	no limit

Fishing Tips

- The best times for fishing are early in the morning and late in the evening, the times that fish naturally feed.
- While trolling, pop gear with worms or shiny lures work well. Travel at about 5 mph; slower for kokanee.
- Water temperature is important. Kokanee like it a mild 52-56°F, while mackinaw prefer the colder zones where temperatures may dip to 45°F.
- Suckers are an important part of the lakes' ecosystem and can be good to eat if the meat is white (during fall and winter). They should be pressure cooked.
- High winds can be expected in the afternoon.

Rules and Regulations

1. Colorado State fishing regulations apply within the recreation area.
2. A valid Colorado fishing license is required for all persons 16 years of age and over. Licenses may be purchased at the marinas or at sporting goods stores in the area.
3. In order to keep the fish populations healthy, please observe the posted limits and note that daily bag and possession limits are the same. Remember that the maximum number of fish you may have anywhere at anytime is the same as the possession limit.
4. Check the fishing statutes for any special regulations which may be in effect regarding special limits, closures, seasons, baits, and any other restrictions. Special regulations close some creeks in the area during the rainbow trout spawn.
5. Pets must be kept under physical restraint, on a leash or left in the vehicle.
6. Motor vehicles are restricted to authorized roads.
7. Open fires are allowed only below the lake's high water mark. Standing timber, alive or dead, may not be cut or used for fuel. Driftwood may be used as a fuel source.